

# **SURVEY OF VETERANS SATISFACTION WITH THE VA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM REHABILITATION PHASE**

**2004 Summary Report  
National Results and Performance Trends**



Surveys and Research Staff  
Office of Performance Analysis and Integrity  
Veterans Benefits Administration  
May 2005

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# ***Acknowledgments***

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<http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/20/cfo/surv/srsindex.html>

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<http://www.vba.va.gov/surveys/>

# *Executive Summary*

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- Nationally, 86.9 percent of all surveyed veterans were very or somewhat satisfied with the rehabilitation process in 2004. This did not differ significantly from the percent satisfied in 2002 (86.2 percent) but it does extend the trend upward from 2001's performance of 82.9 percent.
- The following items were identified as areas of importance to satisfaction with rehabilitation on which VA is performing well (more than **75** percent of veterans indicated satisfaction):

**Very or somewhat satisfied with rehabilitation goal.**

**Counselor is knowledgeable regarding VA's vocational rehabilitation program.**

**Got all or most of needed information from meetings with counselor.**

**Counselor fully addresses all questions, concerns and complaints.**

**Specialist/counselor understands occupational/vocational goals.**

- The following items were identified as areas of importance to satisfaction with rehabilitation on which VA could be performing better (less than **75** percent of veterans indicated satisfaction):

**Counselor gives good information and advice.**

**Counselor has provided assistance according to respondent's individual needs.**

**Reasons for decisions counselor makes regarding program are clearly explained.**

**Counselor shows a caring and compassionate attitude.**

**Counselor shows a genuine interest in respondent's progress.**

**Counselor has a communication style that is easy to understand.**

**Counselor is responsive to needs.**

**Counselor listens to respondent's feelings and concerns.**

**Counselor is available when needed.**

**Got all or most of needed information from primary method of contact with counselor.**

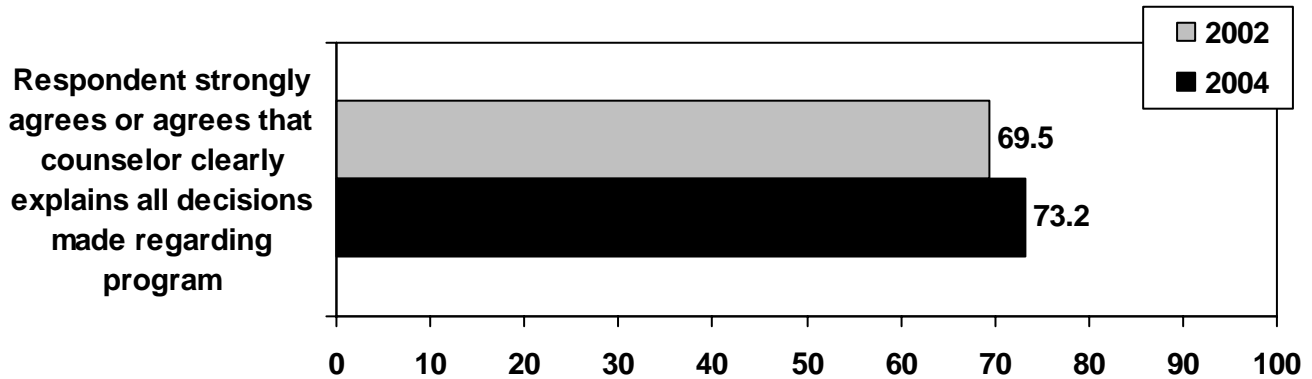
**Very or somewhat easy to get information from VR&E program.**

# Executive Summary

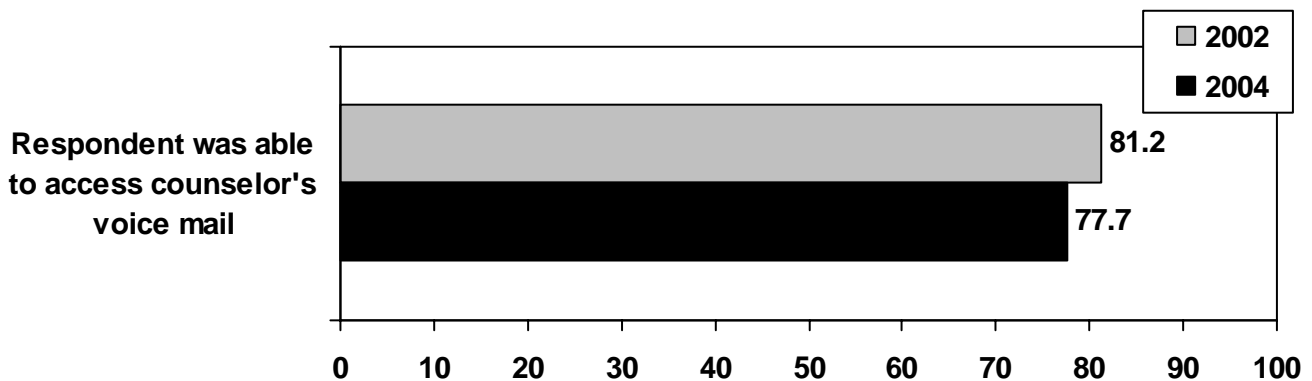
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## Significant Trends

- VR&E's customer satisfaction **increased significantly** on this item relating to the rehabilitation process between 2002 and 2004.



- VR&E's customer satisfaction **decreased significantly** on this item relating to the rehabilitation process between 2002 and 2004.



# *Introduction and Methodology*

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This document presents the results of the 2004 *Survey of Veterans Satisfaction With the VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program, Rehabilitation Phase* for the Nation on selected survey questions. Data are given for 2002 and 2004\*, and in certain cases 2000 through 2004; and results were significance-tested for performance differences between 2002 and 2004.

The data in this report were collected from October of 2004 to January of 2005 using mailed questionnaires. The sample consisted of 2,000 persons (out of a total population of 36,874 persons) who were in the rehabilitation phase for longer than four months or who had just completed the rehabilitation phase in the previous four months. This included those who interrupted or discontinued the program at any time between the period the sample was drawn and data collection was complete. The sample was drawn proportionate to the number of cases within each Regional Office (RO), but was not designed to yield data for any one RO specifically. Of the 2000 cases, 94 had an inaccurate mailing address or were otherwise ineligible. A total of 1,147 respondents completed the Rehabilitation Phase questionnaire for a response rate of 60.2 percent.

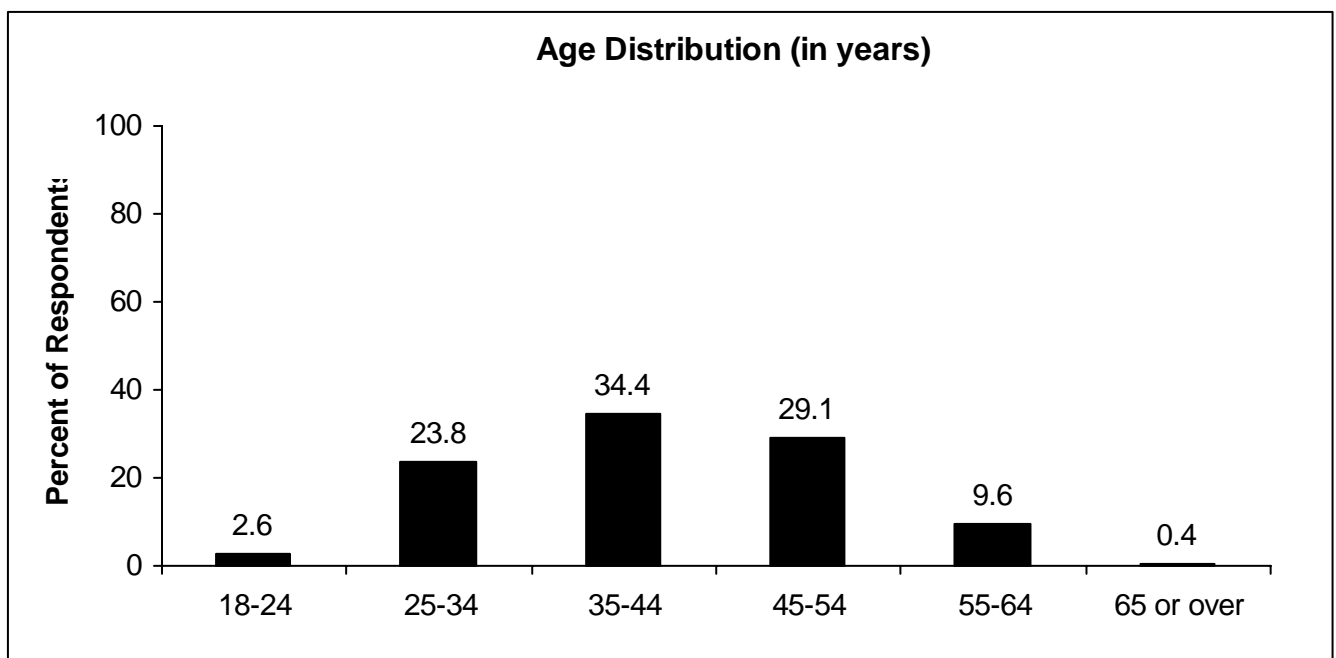
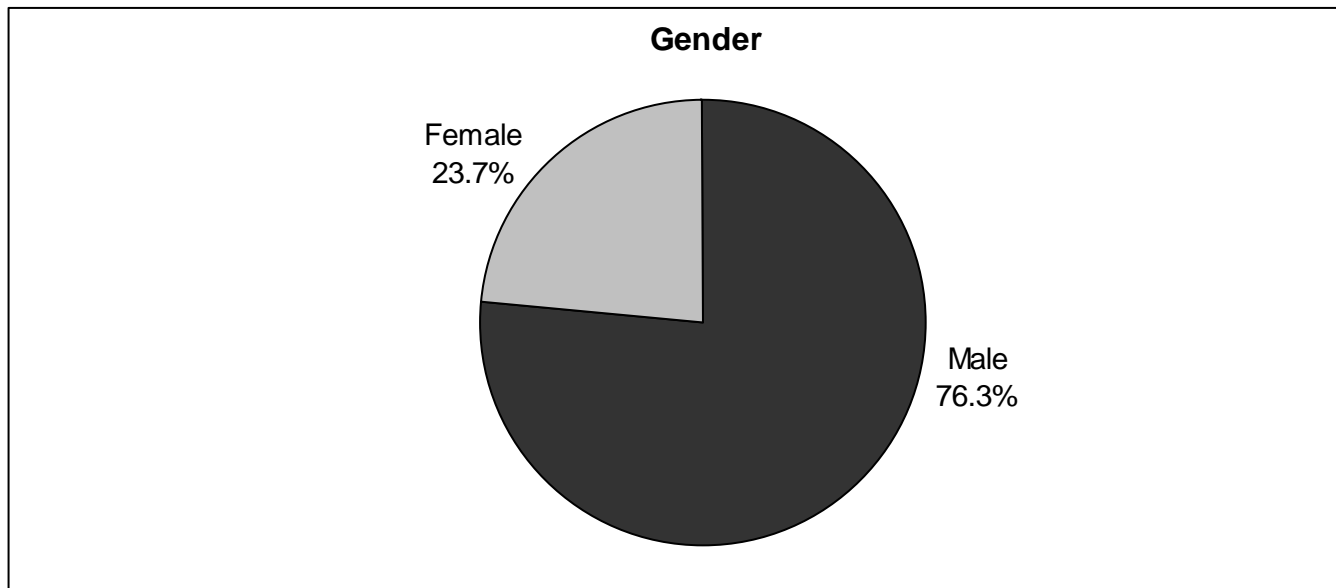
The questionnaire was designed by VBA and is based on information gathered from focus groups with veterans and front-line VR&E employees. It was tested for clarity and relevance in cognitive interviews with veterans, and then pretested in the field from June to August 1999. Using the information from the pretest reports, the VBA Surveys and Research Staff and Caliber Associates modified the questionnaire. An additional section regarding employment services was added to the questionnaire for the 2001 survey administration. Other minor changes that have been made since the pretest are detailed in the national reports of the previous survey administrations. The 2004 Rehabilitation questionnaire is included in this report as an Appendix.

It should be noted that the quantitative data shown in this report represent valid measurements of various elements of customer satisfaction and, as such, are more reliable than qualitative sources of information such as comment cards or focus groups. Survey results provide data used to monitor VBA's performance against customer service standards, provide insight into the key drivers of satisfaction with the VR&E program, and provide the customers' views of organizational performance as required by the Government Performance and Results Act.

\* Note: The survey was not administered in 2003.

# Respondent Characteristics

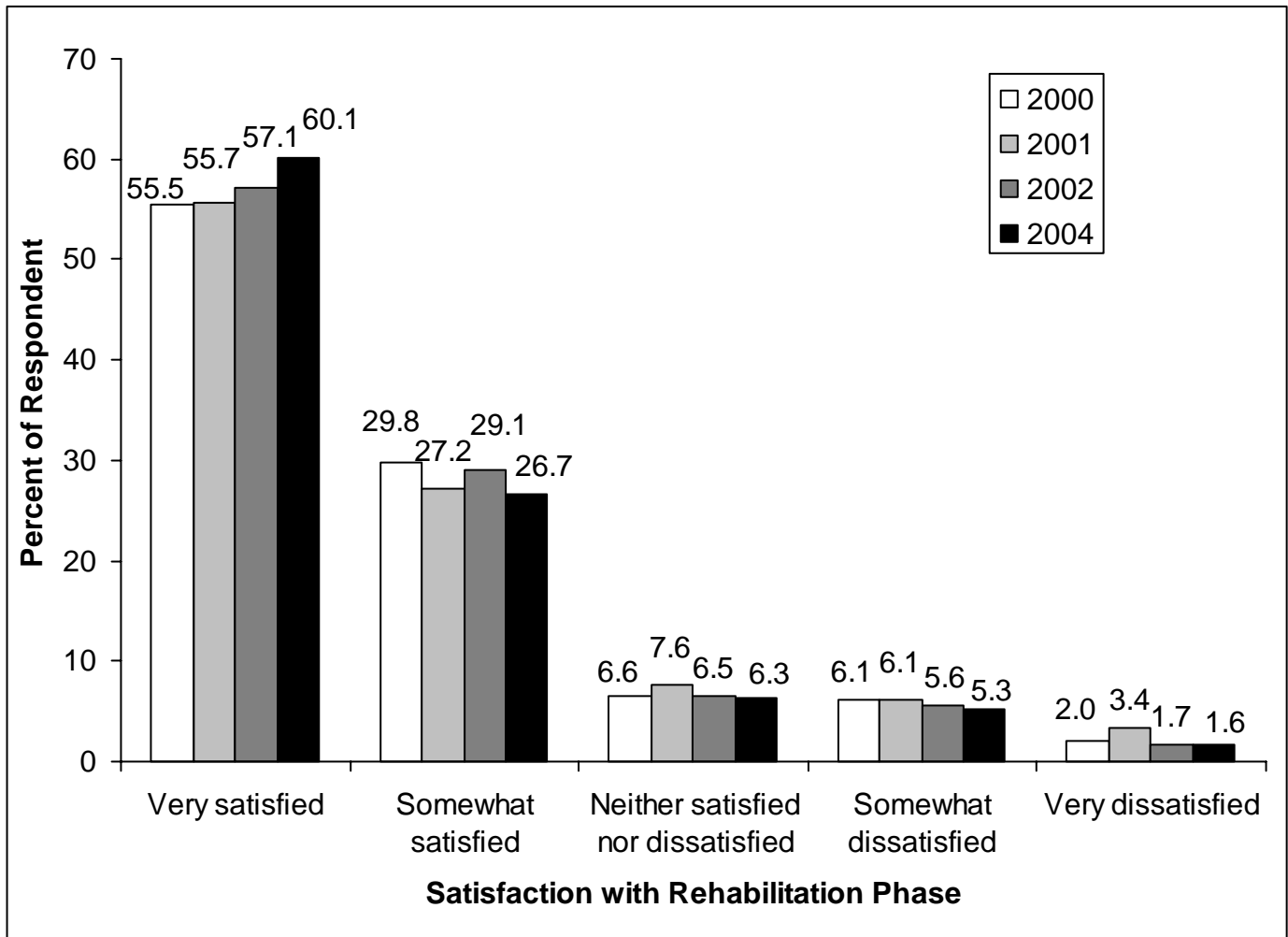
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- The majority of the respondents were male (76.3 percent), and over one-third (34.4 percent) of respondents were between the ages of 35 and 44.

## *Satisfaction with Rehabilitation Phase*

### Overall Satisfaction with Rehabilitation Phase, 2000-2004



There was no significant increase in overall satisfaction with the rehabilitation phase from 2002 to 2004, although the percentage of those **very satisfied** did increase slightly from 57.1 percent in 2002 to 60.1 in 2004.



# *Satisfaction with Rehabilitation Phase*

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## Introduction to Quadrant Analysis

Quadrant analysis is a useful tool in determining which individual performance areas need improvement in order to raise the overall quality of service. The analysis involves determining the importance of individual performance areas (how meaningful an area is to the veteran) and VA's performance in each area. Generally, items with high importance but relatively low performance are those which deserve immediate attention.

Each of the variables represented in the Quadrant Analysis graph are plotted on the basis of:

- 1) **Importance:** This is represented by a variable's correlation with the *overall satisfaction with the particular phase* of the VR&E program. These correlations determine the degree to which variables are related to overall satisfaction. Zero indicates no correlation, and 1 indicates perfect correlation. The closer a variable's correlation (Importance) is to 1, the stronger that variable's relationship is with the overall satisfaction with the particular phase. *Variables that have stronger correlations are considered to have higher importance.*
  
- 2) **Performance:** This is represented by a variable's topbox percent (the percent of people who answered positively to a performance item). Topbox percents represent how well VA is performing within a given area (for example, the percent who thought their counselor completely or mostly understood their feelings and concerns). *The higher the percent, the better VA is performing.*

The quadrant analysis is divided into four quadrants (sections) based on the following combinations of the plotted location of a variable:

**Quadrant I: Critical Improvement Areas (high importance, low performance)**

**Quadrant II: Maintain Relationship Building Variables (high importance, high performance)**

**Quadrant III: Lower Return on High Performance (low importance, high performance)**

**Quadrant IV: Lower Return on Investment (low importance, low performance)**

The horizontal line in the plot represents importance and is placed at .45, which indicates relatively high correlation. The vertical line represents performance and is placed at a percentile representing the average of the performance items, (rounded up or down in increments of 5 percent). The quadrant lines can be moved up or down, left or right, to include more or fewer items in each quadrant. The plotted numbers within each section of the graph correspond with the performance items listed on the following page. These numbers also refer to the question numbers used in the questionnaire.

# *Satisfaction with Rehabilitation Phase*

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## Items in Quadrant Analysis

**Quadrant I** contains eleven (11) items on which VA is not performing as well as it could be, but which significantly impacts veterans satisfaction with the rehabilitation phase.

- **Question 16** Counselor gives good information and advice.
- **Question 18** Counselor has provided assistance according to respondent's individual needs.
- **Question 19** Reasons for decisions counselor makes regarding respondent's particular program are clearly explained.
- **Question 20** Counselor shows a caring and compassionate attitude.
- **Question 21** Counselor shows a genuine interest in respondent's progress.
- **Question 22** Counselor has a communication style that is easy to understand.
- **Question 23** Counselor is responsive to needs.
- **Question 24** Counselor listens to respondent's feelings and concerns.
- **Question 25** Counselor is available when needed.
- **Question 33** Got all or most of needed information from primary method of contact with counselor.
- **Question 46** Very or somewhat easy to get information from VR&E program.

**Quadrant II** contains five (5) items on which VA is performing well and which are important to overall satisfaction. VA should maintain current practices and resources for these items so that performance does not decline and negatively affect satisfaction.

- **Question 2** Very or somewhat satisfied with rehabilitation goal.
- **Question 17** Counselor is knowledgeable regarding VA's vocational rehabilitation program.
- **Question 28** Got all or most of needed information from meetings with counselor.
- **Question 36** Counselor fully addresses all questions, concerns and complaints.
- **Question 41** Specialist/counselor understands occupational/vocational goals.

# *Satisfaction with Rehabilitation Phase*

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## Items in Quadrant Analysis

**Quadrant III** contains eight (8) items on which VA is performing well but which, while important to overall satisfaction, do not have as great an impact as other items.

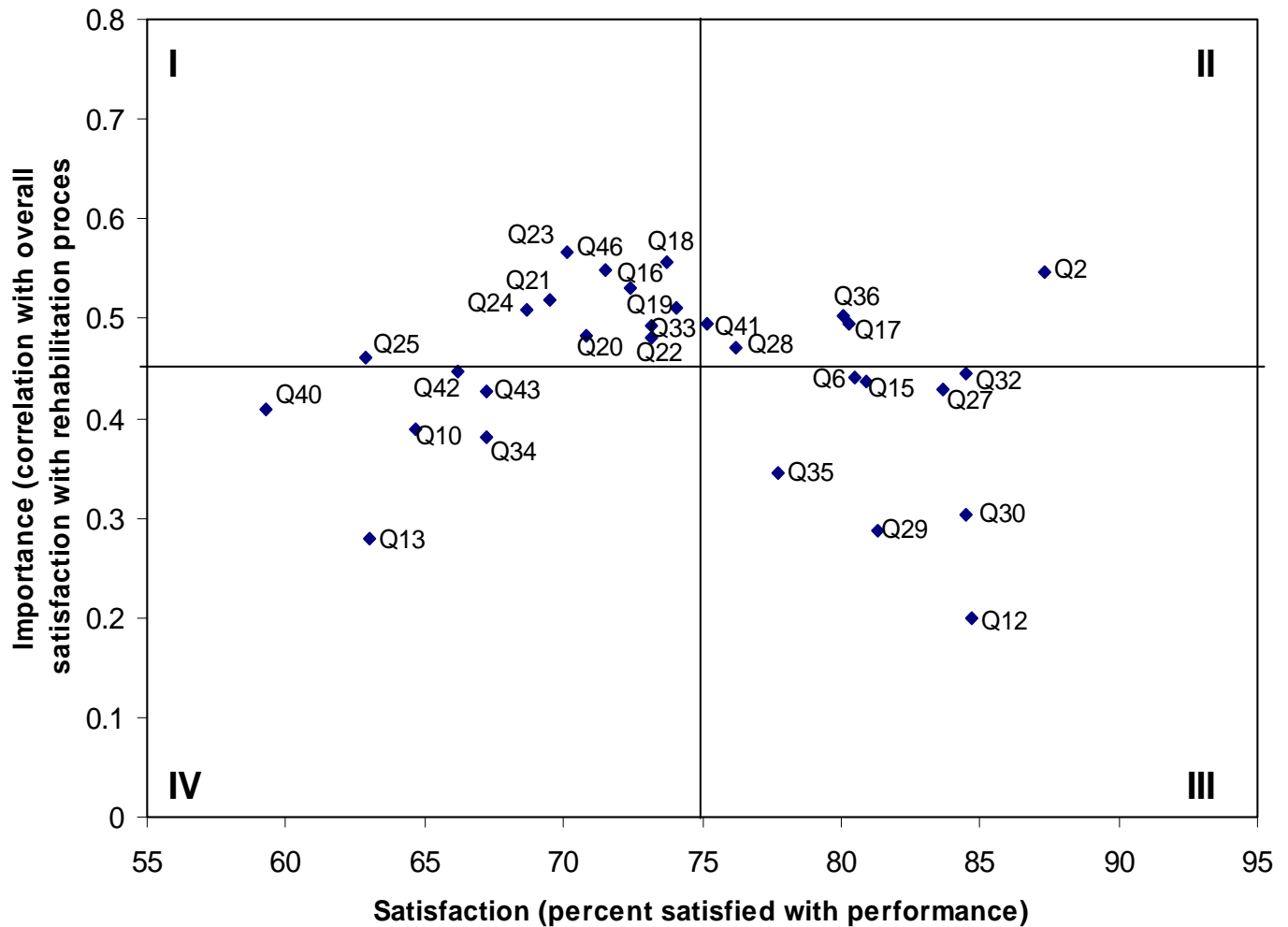
- **Question 6** Counselor completely or mostly explained all benefits and services available during rehabilitation program.
- **Question 12** Never had to borrow or pay unexpected out-of-pocket expenses in order to enroll or stay enrolled in training or education because VA did not provide payments on time.
- **Question 15** Respondent has clear understanding of respective responsibilities of himself and his counselor.
- **Question 27** Number and length of meetings with counselor adequate to meet respondent's needs.
- **Question 29** Location of meetings was very or somewhat convenient.
- **Question 30** Time scheduled for meetings was very or somewhat convenient.
- **Question 32** Counselor was very or somewhat responsive to respondent's primary method of contact.
- **Question 35** Respondent was able to access voice mail and have counselor return call.

**Quadrant IV** contains six (6) items on which VA is not performing as well as it could, but which are also not considered to have as great an impact on overall satisfaction as other items. There is a lower return on investment in these items, but, given resources, improvement could be sought.

- **Question 10** Respondent did not have difficulty obtaining rehabilitation benefits.
- **Question 13** Never had to borrow or pay unexpected out-of-pocket expenses in order to obtain needed supplies or benefits because VA did not provide them when needed.
- **Question 34** Able to get needed information on first call or contact.
- **Question 40** Specialist/counselor is knowledgeable regarding employment markets.
- **Question 42** Specialist/counselor helps respondent focus on employment goal.
- **Question 43** Specialist/counselor is concerned about quality of job placement.

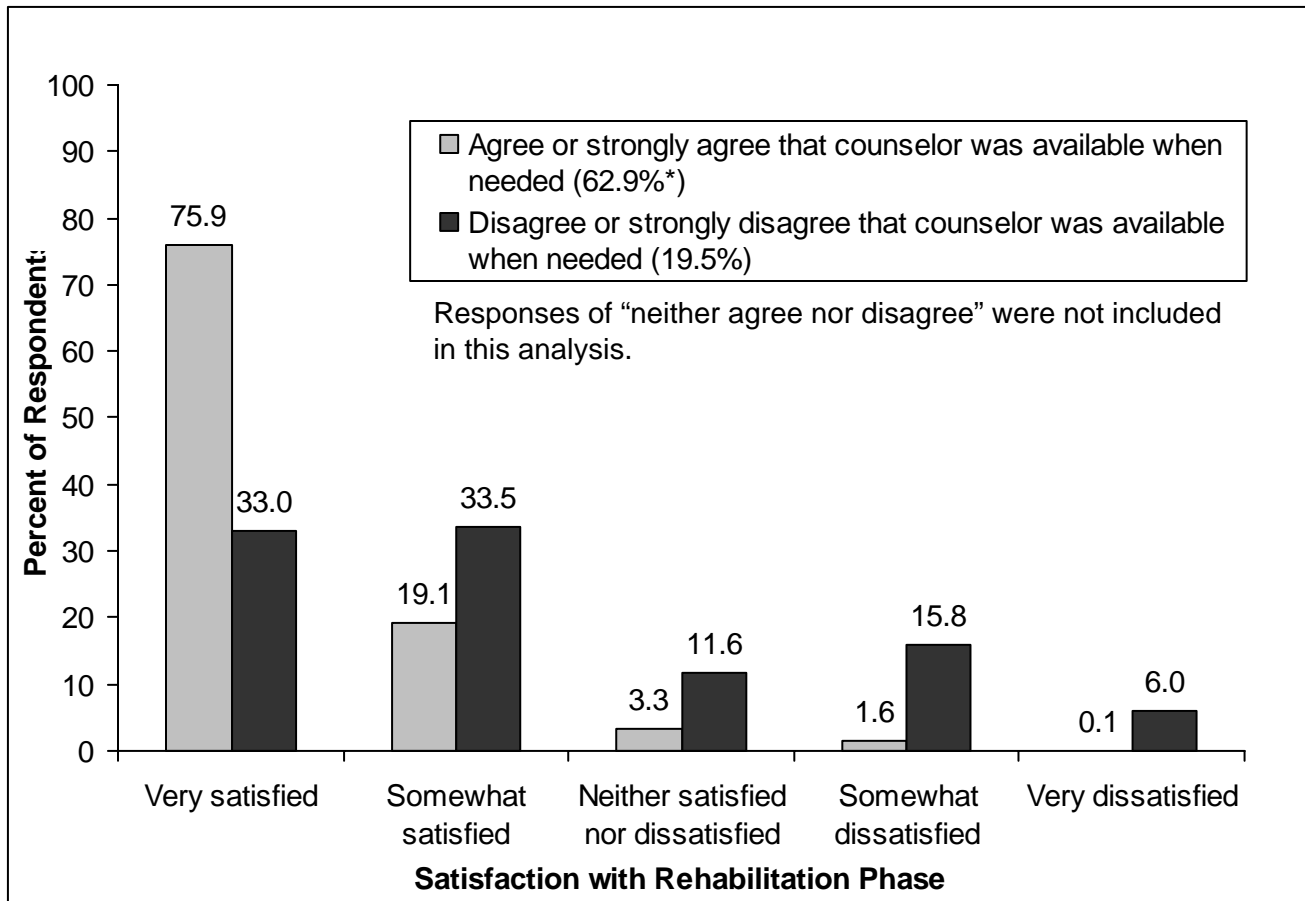
# *Satisfaction with Rehabilitation Phase*

## Quadrant Analysis



## ***Influences on Overall Satisfaction***

### **Overall Satisfaction with Rehabilitation Phase by Whether Counselor was Available When Needed**

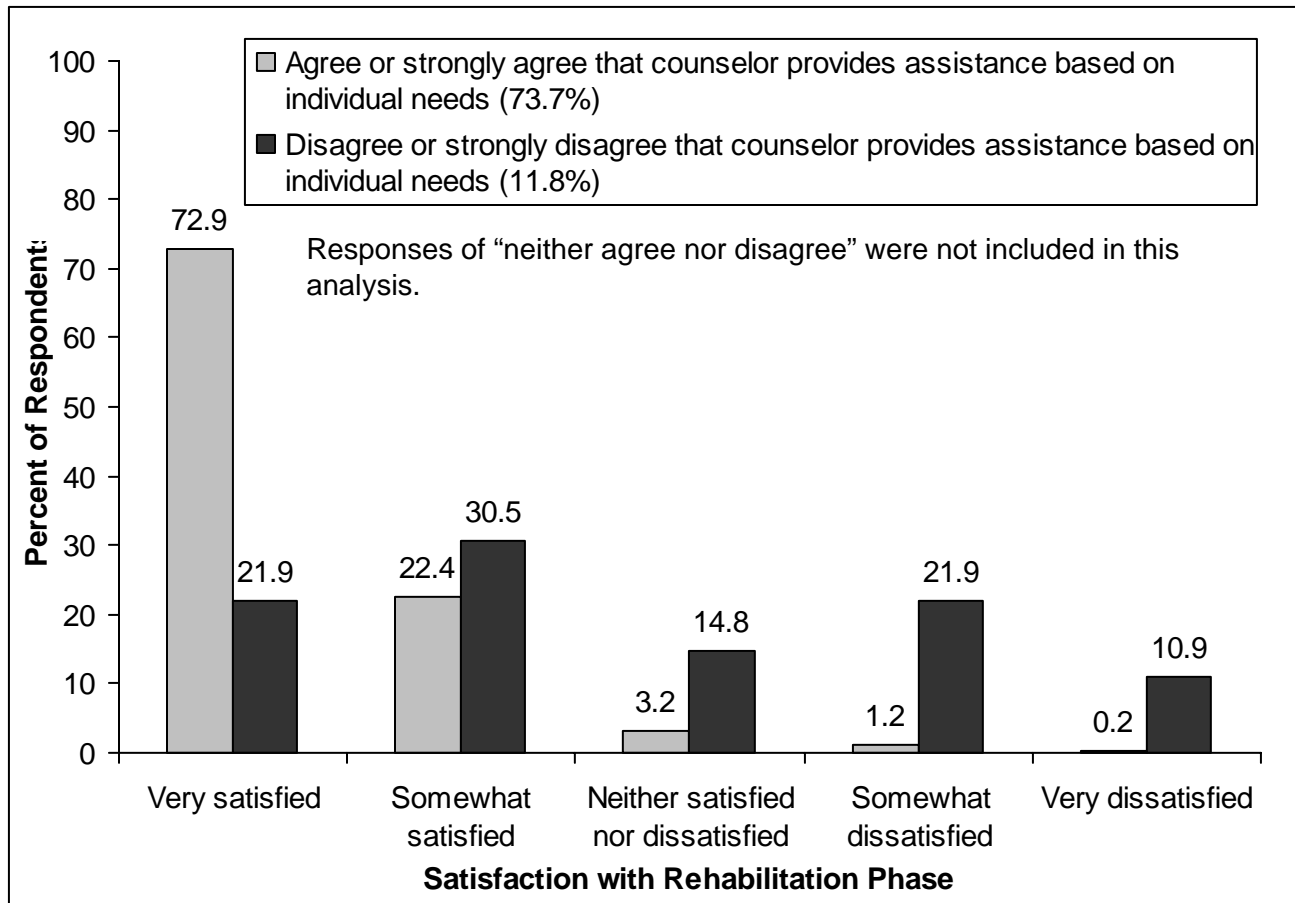


Of those who agreed that their counselor was available when needed, 95 percent were very or somewhat satisfied with the rehabilitation phase of the program. Only 66.5 percent of those who thought their counselor was not available when needed were very or somewhat satisfied with the phase.

\* Number in parentheses represents percent of respondents marking these answer choices.

## ***Influences on Overall Satisfaction***

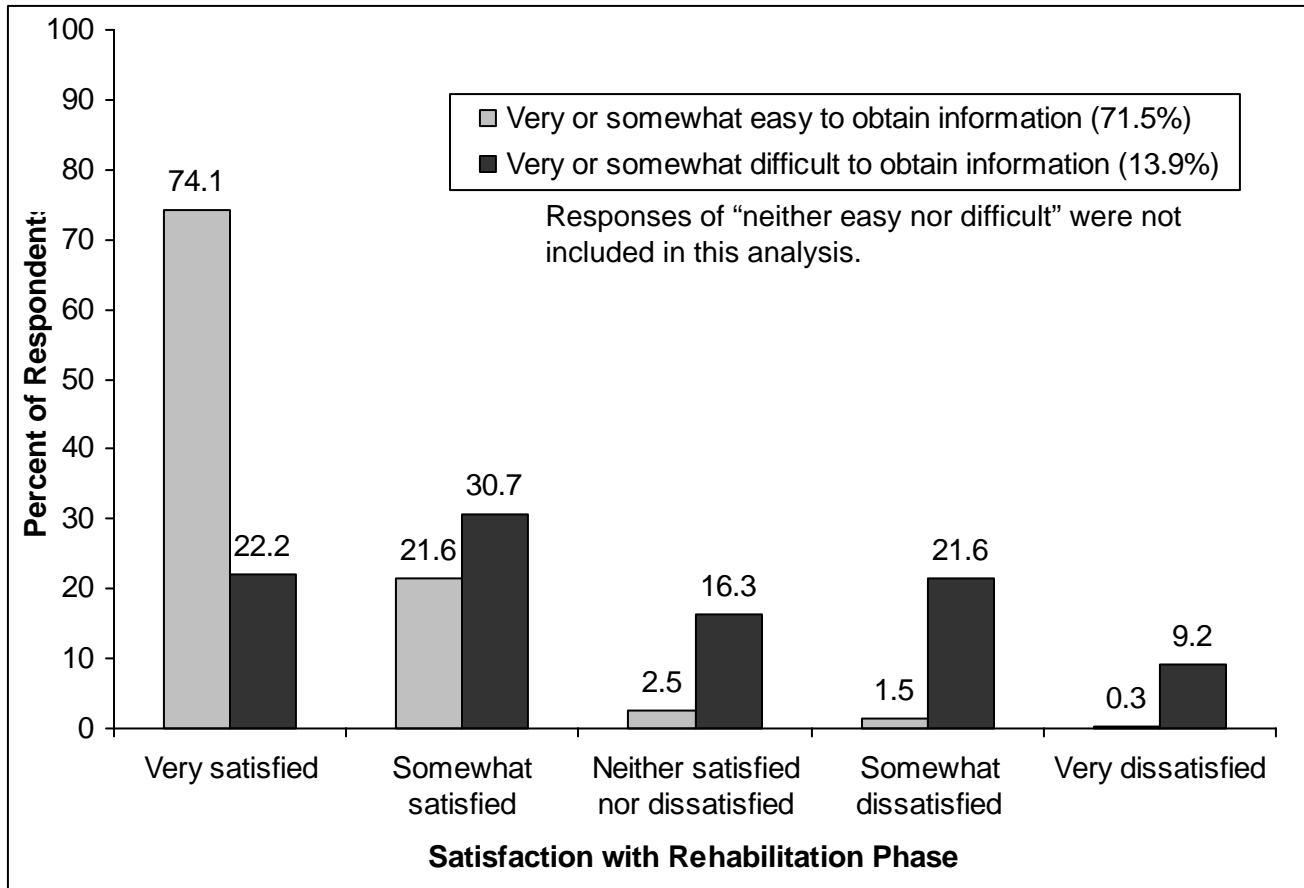
### Overall Satisfaction with Rehabilitation Phase by Whether Counselor Provided Assistance Based on Respondent's Individual Needs



Almost three-fourths (72.9 percent) of those who thought their counselor provided assistance based on their individual needs were **very** satisfied with the rehabilitation phase, vs. only 21.9 percent of those who did not feel the assistance was based on their individual needs.

## ***Influences on Overall Satisfaction***

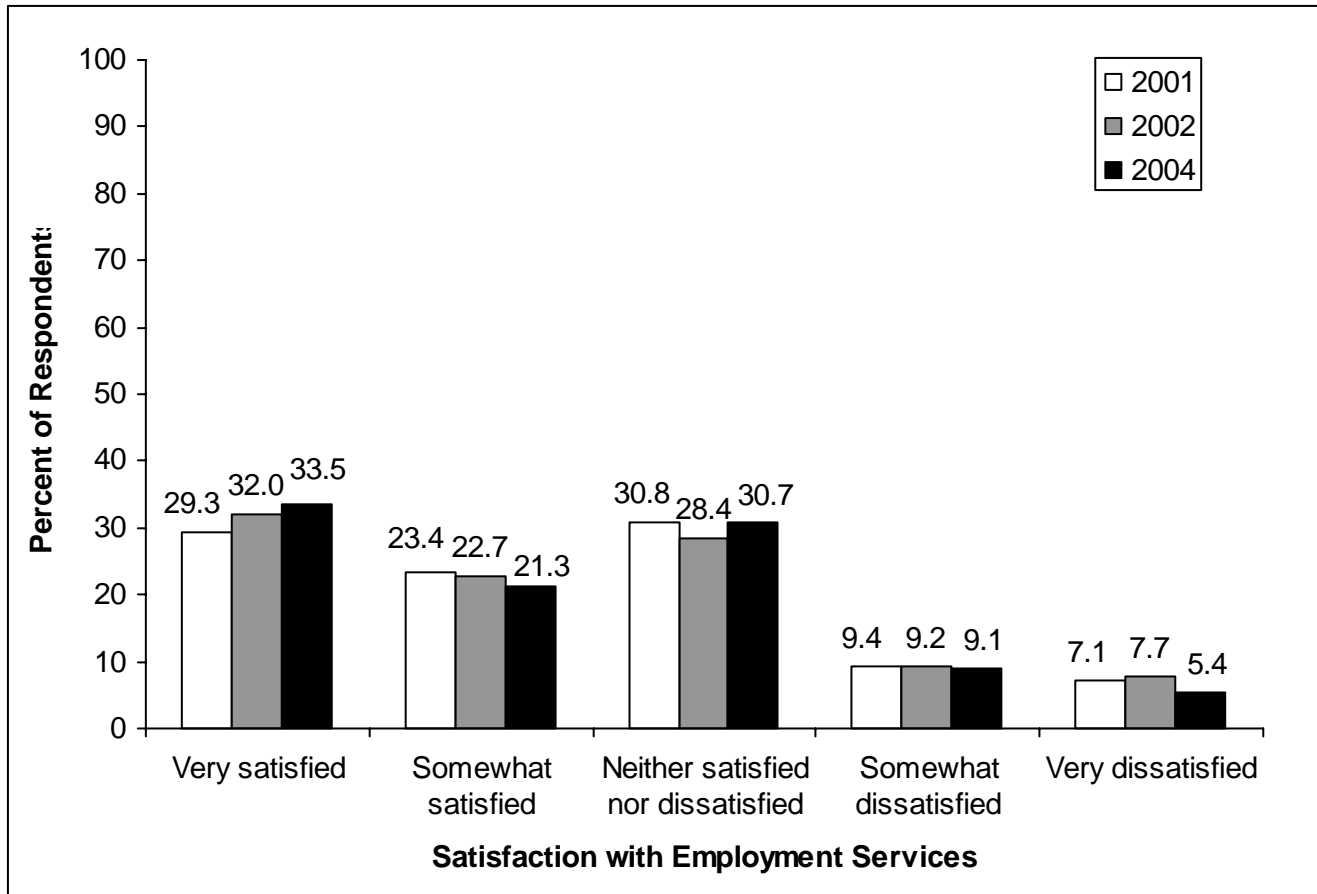
### **Overall Satisfaction with Rehabilitation Phase by Ease of Obtaining Information from VR&E Program**



Nearly two-thirds (30.8 percent) of the respondents who felt that it was very or somewhat difficult to obtain information from the VR&E program were somewhat or very dissatisfied with the rehabilitation phase.

## ***Employment Services During Rehabilitation Phase***

### **Overall Satisfaction with Employment Services (of Those Who Have Received Employment Services During Rehabilitation Phase)**



Overall, of those who said they received employment services during this phase (33.1 percent), 54.8 percent were very or somewhat satisfied with the services provided in 2004. This is not a significant increase over the 2001 or 2002 percentages. Almost a third of the respondents each year who had received some employment services reported they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, which may indicate that they have not had enough experience with employment services during this phase to make a determination.



## *Appendix*

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### Rehabilitation Phase Questionnaire